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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0797  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7142  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 7463  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 2799  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 5504  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 6625  
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3673

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000884

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/INSB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/18/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KDEM](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [MCAP](#) [IN](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: DASD SCHER, COAS ON PEACE PROCESS ISSUES

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i., Jeffrey A. Moon. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Chief of Army Staff Chhatraman Singh Gurung asked Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Scher for the United States to resume the supply of lethal assistance to the Nepal Army (NA). Gurung supports the peace process and civilian supremacy but is willing to step in should the Government of Nepal invite the NA to stabilize the country. He would like to see more military cooperation between Nepal and India. DASD Scher urged the COAS to help Nepal's political leadership make concrete progress toward the integration and rehabilitation of Maoist combatants, address human rights abuses, and resolve other peace process issues. End summary.

#### Peace Process and Integration

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¶2. (C) Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gurung told Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) Scher in a meeting on September 16 that Nepal has an unstable security situation, but change could happen soon. The COAS suggested the Government of Nepal (GON) may ask the Nepal Army "to do something" if the GON is unable to stabilize the country, but did not elaborate further. The COAS emphasized that he supports the peace process and civilian control of the NA. He said the NA would obey the final decision of the GON and special and technical committees for the supervision of integration and rehabilitation of Maoist combatants. Gurung said his main concern is integration should not "disintegrate" the NA. DASD encouraged the COAS to show concrete progress toward peace process goals. DASD said he realized these are mostly political issues that will require decisions by the political leadership, but the COAS could persuade the parties to push the process.

#### U.S. Assistance

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¶3. (C) COAS Gurung lobbied for the United States to resume supply of lethal assistance. Gurung asserted that the NA is filled with expert, disciplined personnel -- many well trained at U.S. military institutions -- but they lack the equipment to effectively counter a national disaster. DASD acknowledged the United States recognizes the NA's need for equipment, and there may be future U.S. funds available for non-lethal peacekeeping and disaster management purposes. DASD explained he could do a better job convincing Washington

to support the NA if the COAS and political leaders could show concrete progress toward integration and rehabilitation of Maoist combatants, address of past human rights abuses, and commitment to civilian oversight of the military.

#### Cooperation with India

14. (C) The NA should work closely with India to join systems to suppress criminal and extremist activities and stabilize regional security. The COAS said a weak NA is not good for India. He noted the Indian Foreign Secretary announced at a press conference during her visit to Kathmandu that the Government of India is willing to fulfill the GON's request for military assistance. Current military cooperation between Nepal and India is limited to training; India previously provided equipment. Gurung suggested the NA could organize joint operations with the Indian Army to eliminate safehavens for cross-border elements. The COAS claimed criminals based in India commit cross-border crimes; these elements affect eastern Nepal along its border with the Indian states of West Bengal and Darjeeling. Gurung said although India is strengthening its border security forces, Nepal has no real equivalent beyond "some armed police."

#### Comment

15. (C) The timing of DASD's visit was fortuitous: Only a week into his tenure as COAS, Gurung had the opportunity to share his interests and concerns directly with a high-level U.S. official. Likewise, DASD Scher demonstrated Washington's high-level interest in Nepal and was able to

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press the new COAS on human rights, civilian control, and peace process issues.  
MOON